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Commission on the Status of Women
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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: current challenges and forward-looking strategies for the advancement and empowerment of women and girls

Statement presented by the International Federation of Social Workers, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2005/1.

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Statement

The profession of social work seeks to address human rights issues such as poverty and education which directly affect the advancement of women and girls, by promoting social change, problem solving in relationships, and the enhancement of well-being.[1] IFSW recognizes that poverty is a critical issue affecting women. Women, therefore, are in need of improved economic prospects that ensure financial independence and security.

Education is a crucial intervention to ameliorating the poverty experienced by women. It is also an investment that is made in the society as a whole. A strong correlation exists between the education of women and an improved chance of survival for them and their children. Women who are educated tend to have access to greater employment opportunities that enhance their quality of life. IFSW supports the full participation of women in all educational processes as a way to advance the economic well-being of all people.

In conclusion, we strongly urge all non-governmental and governmental stakeholders:

- To develop feasible programs of economic and social support which increase the opportunities available to women.
- To eliminate the discrimination of women in the areas of earnings, employment, access to credit and employment-related public and private social benefit systems.[2]
- To eradicate gender-biased schooling and encourage women and girls to participate fully in educational systems.
- To advocate for the benefits education affords women by increasing public awareness through the use of governmental, community and media campaigns.

[1] http://www.ifsw.org/Publications/4.6e.pub.html
[2] http://www.ifsw.org/Publications/4.6.5.9.pub.html